

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – PUBLIC MEETING

1000 hours on Wednesday, 10 April 2024, Committee Rooms 3 & 4,

Council House

Minutes

Present:

Councillor Kerry Jenkins - Chair

Councillors: Jilly Bermingham, Debbie Clancy, Jane Jones, and Shehla Moledina

Other Representatives: Ted Hammond – Roman Catholic Diocese, Osamugi Ogbe - Parent Governor, and Sarah Smith - Church of England Diocese

Also Present:

Cllr Karen McCarthy, Cabinet Member, Children, Young People and Families

Tim Boyes, Chief Executive, Birmingham Education Partnership (BEP)

David Fallows, Head of Digital, Evidence and Performance

Sarah Fradgley, Overview and Scrutiny Manager

Dr Sue Harrison, Strategic Director, Children and Families

Lisa Smith, School Improvement – Strategic Development and Headteacher of Virtual School

Amanda Simcox, Scrutiny Officer

Lindsey Trivett, Head of Early Years and Childcare

1. NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST

The Chair advised that the meeting would be webcast for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's Public-I microsite and that members of the press/public may record and take photographs except where there are confidential or exempt items.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for non-attendance were received on behalf of Cllr Adam Higgs, Cllr Des Hughes, and Rabia Shami - Parent Governor.

3. NEW APPOINTMENT

RESOLVED:

Noted Ted Hammond replaces Justine Lomas to serve on the Committee as the Roman Catholic diocese representative co-opted member.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Members were reminded they must declare all relevant pecuniary and other registerable interests arising from any business to be discussed at this meeting, and the Chair – Cllr Kerry Jenkins declared an interest as she was employed by the Unite union in a national role and had no direct involvement in local or Birmingham City Council industrial relations or other matters concerning employees of the Council.

Cllr Shehla Moledina declared that she works for a charity organisation whereby there was engagement with schools, but they were not engaged with the council or employees.

5. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2024 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

6. ACTION TRACKER

The Chair requested the Strategic Director chase up the response to the outstanding actions / questions for the SEND Sufficiency Strategy before it was presented to Cabinet on 23 April 2024. The Strategic Director committed to chasing up the response.

RESOLVED:

That:

- The action tracker be noted.
- The Strategic Director to chase up a response to the outstanding actions / questions for the SEND Sufficiency Strategy prior to presentation to Cabinet on 23 April 2024.

7. COMMISSIONER'S REVIEW AND COMMENTS ON THE AGENDA

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted that no comments had been received from the Commissioner on this agenda.

8. SCHOOL ATTAINMENT

Dr Sue Harrison, Strategic Director, Children and Families, Lisa Smith, Head of Virtual School, Tim Boyes, Chief Executive, Birmingham Education Partnership, David Fallows, Head of Digital, Evidence and Performance, and Lindsey Trivett, Head of Early Years and Childcare, were in attendance for this item.

The Chair welcomed the attendees and the work undertaken for this item but requested that future reports and presentations achieved the right balance of information for members to navigate and absorb that provided headlines and key information that members need, which was backed up by the data.

The Strategic Director confirmed that in future officers will ensure that headlines were highlighted for the key stages - what was going well, areas of concern, and what was being done to improve attainment. Introducing the report, the Strategic Director highlighted that the pandemic was still having an impact on attainment, and some groups were not achieving as well as their peers. The Directorate was working with head teachers to better understand the challenges and there were also some achievements in the data to be celebrated.

The Head of Virtual School gave the presentation and highlighted attainment, comparisons with national, core cities and statistical neighbours rates and actions and support provided for Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), Key Stage One, Key Stage Two, Key Stage Four, 16 – 18, post 16 – 18, and Children Looked After (CLA) to raise attainment.

During the debate, the following points were addressed:

Attendance and Exclusions

Responding to the questions regarding attendance and exclusions, the Strategic Director commented that they were working on the Attendance Strategy and a draft would be brought to the committee and highlighted that the measles epidemic had impacted school attendance. The Exclusions Strategy would also be brought to the committee.

In addition, officers were working with schools as part of the Inclusive City work which the Director, SEND and Inclusion was leading on, and there was a meeting with head teachers on 25 April 2024 to share the 'Balanced Education System' thinking and new arrangements to ensure the local authority could deliver its statutory duties relating to schools causing concern, from September 2024.

In relation to children with SEND needing support and causal factors on behaviour, the School Improvement – Strategic Development and Headteacher of Virtual School explained the work to support schools through the Developing Learning Project (DLP). This year's school collaborative projects included three KPIs, one related to behaviour

and how children were supported with emotional and self-regulation, along with reducing suspension rates, and one related to improving the achievement of children with SEND.

BEP and School Improvement

The Director of BEP suggested the challenge for the committee was what “lens the Committee wanted to look at attainment,” as this has been shaped by their contract with the Council, which was to provide support for the priority schools identified and a focus for key underachieving groups for every Key Stage. The meeting was informed that the contract for schools causing concern was ending and key outcomes were provided.

The Strategic Director highlighted the timetable for the new relationship with schools, developing alongside the ‘Balanced Education System’. An update on this, together with the school improvement and school achievement strategies, would be brought to the Committee.

Key Stage 1 (KS1)

The Head of Early Years and Childcare confirmed that the level of take-up of the early years education entitlement offer was a causal factor for KS1 attainment levels and highlighted these children were the initial cohort effected by the pandemic.

Surplus Capacity, Social Mobility and KS4

It was confirmed that achievement was depicted where the schools were located rather than where pupils live, and there was surplus capacity in some areas. The Head of Digital, Evidence and Performance made reference to an interactive dashboard being developed , and the Strategic Director suggested the committee may want to do a deep dive due to the complexity involved.

The Chair summed up the discussion and welcomed the use of the dashboard to assist Members in the future, and noted the Attendance, Exclusions, Attainment and Achievement strategies will be brought to the Committee. The Chair also informed Members that they could e-mail the Scrutiny Officers if they have any unanswered questions.

RESOLVED:

That:

- The Committee noted and commented on the School Attainment report and presentation.
- The Attendance, Exclusions, Attainment and Achievement strategies to be provided to the Committee in the future.
- Members to e-mail the Scrutiny Officers if they have any unanswered questions.

9. WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair commented that there were currently two items for the 15 May 2024 committee meeting and suggested that the update on the short breaks review be a separate item on the agenda rather than part of the Refreshed Improving Services for Children and Families Plan item. The Committee agreed to this.

The Chair highlighted that the Child Criminal Exploitation Inquiry would be presented at City Council on 16 April 2024 and thanked the Members who took part in the Inquiry, which was a really useful piece of work that would support the Council and Partners to protect as many children and young people as possible.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme was agreed and subject to further input from the Chair and Deputy Chair, be submitted to Co-ordinating O&S Committee to enable work to be planned and co-ordinated throughout the year.

10. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the next meeting be held on 15 May 2024 at 10am.

11. REQUEST(S) FOR CALL IN/COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION/PETITIONS RECEIVED (IF ANY)

None.

12. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

None.

The meeting ended at 11.02 hours.